

FACT SHEET

Decorating With House Plants

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LIVING with plants is not a new idea. Centuries ago it became common practice to select especially interesting specimens, domesticate them, and derive pleasure from having living growing things close at hand indoors.

Perhaps it is enough that well cultured plants are things of beauty in themselves. However, more and more we have come to appreciate that without detracting from their intrinsic values, plants can be selected and so placed as to become important factors in the decorative scheme of a room as a whole.

It follows then, that in decorating with house plants something more than plant culture skill is called for. Art principles come into play when plants are effectively used to enhance and complete decorative room schemes.

Consider the style of furnishings in a room. Are they early American or colonial with a feeling of cozy warmth? Are they traditional with a feeling of formality? Are they Scandinavian modern with a feeling of sleek simplicity? Or are they French Provincial with a feeling of elegance? The house plants used should carry the same general feeling; they should be in harmony with the spirit created by the other furnishings.

The colors found in walls and floor coverings are the backgrounds for your plants and will flatter or compliment them, if selected with care. Dark green leafy plants will be very effective used against a light background. Against dark walls, use plants having lighter foliage. Panelled warm toned wood walls are flattering backgrounds for all green plant materials. Against dark woods use contrasting lighter plants, and with light woods use darker toned plants.

Plain or solid colors make the best backgrounds for plants. Highly patterned walls and carpets are poor backgrounds for any plant materials. With patterned things, use plain-colored, simply-shaped plants. The backgrounds themselves may furnish enough decorative quality without the addition of plants. Many plants have leaves of unusual shape and pattern which are entirely lost when placed against an already richly patterned surface.

The relation between the size and shape of the plant and the space where it is used is highly important. Is the space or background large or small? Is it a horizontal space, a vertical space, or a square space? Use a plant, or a group of plants, similar in shape and of sufficient size to adequately fill, but not crowd the space. Use flat low plants on coffee tables. If the space available is small, use an ivy in a copper or brass pot—or hang a strawberry begonia plant on the wall or in a window.

An interesting flat arrangement can

be made by placing several sprigs of philodendron in a small glass bowl or pie plate. Use a needlepoint holder, secured with florist's clay in the center of the dish to anchor the cut ends. Surround the holder with colored glass marbles or pebbles. Place the arrangement on a large plate or platter of a plain color and allow the vines to grow around the inside edge of the plate. You will enjoy watching this flat and low arrangement develop. If some height is needed in the center, use a stalk or two of nephthytis.

The selection of a plant or where it can be placed often is determined by culture requirements. Nothing detracts more from a decorating scheme than plants which have become sickly because of being placed in a dark corner, a drafty area, or a hot sunny spot. Know the needs of plants before deciding on a particular one for any location.

The container for a house plant should be in keeping with the surrounding furnishings. It should stay quietly in the background, doing its



This plant competes with a leaf pattern on the wall. The result is a cluttered appearance.



Here the same plant, against a plain background, can be seen and enjoyed.

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job without attracting undue attention. A simple green container goes well with many plants. However, brass and copper containers may be used for contrast or when additional interest is needed. For sharp contrast, try a white container with dark green foliage.

A planter filled with house plants makes a good centerpiece to use on the bare dining table between meals. For example; use three African violets with the center one the largest. If extra color is needed in an area, try three red foliage plants, or two of light green and one red one. Keep the plants in their own clay pots. When they be-

come unshapely or overgrown they can easily be replaced. Use small foil pans under each pot to collect seepage.

Flowering bulbs of all kinds are among the most satisfying plants to use. Place them on the dining table and enjoy their rapid growth and fragrant blooms at close hand.

Mirrors double the apparent size and amount of anything placed in front of them. Many of you receive house plants at holiday time or for special occasions. Try placing the pot of mums or lovely poinsettia in front of a mirror over your buffet. A simple plant becomes quite elegant admiring

its own reflection. You can double your satisfaction from the original investment.

There is no hard and fast rule concerning the number of plants you may use in a single room. You have been in rooms that were cluttered with plants on every window sill and flat surface, giving the feeling of being in a greenhouse. It will not be necessary to count the number of plants if: They complete the decorating scheme, harmonize in color, provide a variety of sizes and shapes, and seem to be at home in their surroundings. These things will achieve the desired effect.



This milk glass footed vase, used as a container for Nephthytis, is definitely Early American in style and will harmonize with other furnishings of that period.



Philodendron in a pottery pitcher is silhouetted against a light wall. Plain or solid colors make the best backgrounds for plants.



This strongly vertical plant, Philodendron supported on an Osmunda stake, nicely fits the wall background.



Ti plant. In the informal setting of a porch or patio, a simple redwood bucket is a suitable plant container.

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